

the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which granted women, and therefore African American women, the right to vote.

These important anniversaries give special meaning to Black History Month this year, reflected in the 2020 theme, “African Americans and the Vote.” This theme speaks to the long struggle on the part of Black men and women to secure their place in American democracy, through the Constitution and its guarantee of an unfettered and unabridged right to vote.

The 15th Amendment was the third and final amendment adopted in the aftermath of the Civil War. Together, the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments abolished slavery, granted citizenship to African Americans and etched the right to vote into the Constitution.

While these amendments protected and expanded the rights of African Americans, too often throughout our history these rights existed on paper only. For the first century following ratification of the 15th Amendment, racial violence, poll taxes, and other forms of voter discrimination and disenfranchisement prevented African Americans from making their voices heard at the ballot box.

Progress was slow. For every one step forward, we were often pushed two steps back. But the Civil Rights movement and, most importantly, the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 brought America closer to its promise of all Americans receiving equal protection under the law.

This struggle continues today. A century and a half after receiving the right to vote and more than 50 years after passage of the Voting Rights Act, African Americans continue to face discrimination and barriers at the ballot box. Voter purges, early voting cutbacks, strict ID requirements, and discriminatory gerrymandering of legislative districts are just some of the modern-day tactics that prevent African Americans from making their voices heard.

As we celebrate this important anniversary, may we work to fulfill the text of the 15th amendment, which said the right to vote “shall not be denied or abridged by the United

States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the ratification of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution.

The right to vote freely and fairly is the foundation of our democracy. And yet, 150 years ago, this great nation prohibited an entire group of citizens from voting by law. 150 years seems so long ago but at the same time so near to us now.

We know that even though, 150 years ago, our lawmakers said you cannot deny voters based on the color of their skin, that states were still allowed to functionally discriminate against African Americans. Back then it was literacy tests, when they knew the people who could not read were by and large former slaves. Poll taxes for black people. Threats of having your house burned down, being beaten, or even murdered if you dared to try and exercise your Constitutional right to vote.

These practices persisted for a long time, until the Civil Rights Movement of the 50s and 60s. The brave actions of these peaceful protesters put them directly into harms way. Many were beaten, like our colleague JOHN LEWIS, and tragically some were murdered, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Their leadership directly paved the way to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This landmark legislation finally prohibited any voting law that intentionally or not, resulted in the discrimination against racial minorities. Section 5 closely monitored states that had previously used such laws in the past, so they could not slip under the radar.

Unfortunately, Section 5 enforcement was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2013. The rationale was this fight was so long ago that such monitoring was not needed anymore. I can assure you it was not that long ago to me nor anyone else who lived through it. 48 years is not even a lifetime for most Americans, and yet it was supposed to be long enough to correct nearly 400 years of op-

pression and disenfranchisement for African Americans.

Of course, the predictable has now happened because 48 years was not long enough to right the wrongs. We are seeing new voting laws that will harm people of color, the poor, and the elderly disproportionately: new photo ID requirements, registration restrictions, and even mass purging of the voter rolls. Voter suppression is happening in 2020 in the same states Section 5 watched closely from 1965 to 2013.

We have indeed come a long way from codifying voter suppression explicitly by race. We have come a long way from the physical violence that was a real threat when heading to the polls. However, we still have so far to go. It is too easy to get complacent—to think what we have won cannot be taken back. But it can be, it already was in 2013. Now we have to get back to work—protect what we have and push for what we don’t.

I rise today appreciating how far we have come in the last 150 years and remembering how far we must go in the next 150 years.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. COOPER (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. MULLIN (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today and the balance of the week on account of supporting his son’s continuing recovery.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. HORSFORD. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o’clock and 12 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, February 11, 2020, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Official Foreign Travel during the third and fourth quarters of 2019, pursuant to Public Law 95-384, are as follows:

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN OCT. 1 AND DEC. 31, 2019

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem ¹		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²
Hon. Glenn Thompson	11/2	11/3	Japan		146.00						146.00
Hon. Glenn Thompson	11/3	11/5	Australia		999.00						999.00
Hon. Glenn Thompson	11/6	11/8	New Zealand		962.91						962.91
Committee total					2,107.91						2,107.91

¹ Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.

² If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.

HON. COLLIN C. PETERSON, Jan. 27, 2020.

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN OCT. 1 AND DEC. 31, 2019

Name of Member or employee	Date		Country	Per diem ¹		Transportation		Other purposes		Total	
	Arrival	Departure		Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²	Foreign currency	U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ²
Hon. Andy Harris, MD	9/28	10/1	Tunisia		570.03			908.93			1,478.96
	10/1	10/3	Israel		1,040.00			701.19			1,741.19
	10/3	10/6	Morocco		2,111.60			1,622.23			3,733.83